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A RADIO DISCUSSION OF

Should America Convoy to Britain?

LELAND C. DE VINNEY
PHILIP F. LA FOLLETTE
CLIFTON M. UTLEY

371st BROADCAST IN COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY · 159

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NOTE

The supplementary information contained in the footnotes to the following text, developed by staff research, is not to be considered as representing the opinions of the ROUND TABLE *speakers. Following the transcript of the broadcast are questions which readers may wish to use for analysis and discussion. It is hoped that teachers and discussion leaders may find this additional service of the* ROUND TABLE *transcript helpful in their study of the subject discussed in the broadcast.*

SHOULD AMERICA CONVOY TO BRITAIN?

A UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO ROUND TABLE BROADCAST*

●

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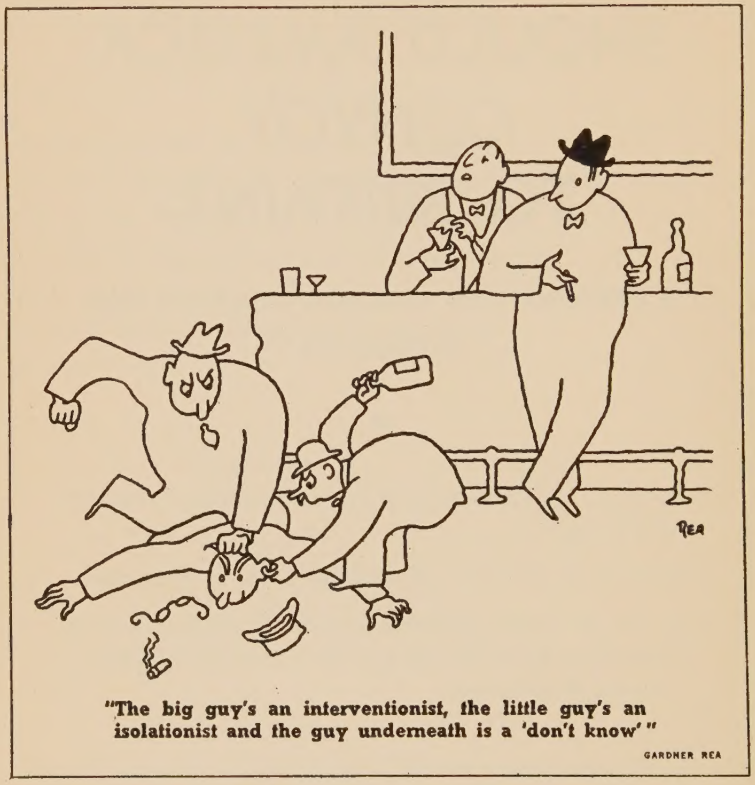
PHILIP F. LA FOLLETTE, former governor of Wisconsin

CLIFTON M. UTLEY, Director, Chicago Council on Foreign Relations; Vice-Chairman of the University of Chicago Alumni Foundation

* A radio discussion broadcast from the University of Chicago over the Red Network of the National Broadcasting Company, Sunday, March 30, 1941, at 1:30 P.M., Central Standard Time.

The ROUND TABLE, oldest educational program continuously on the air, is broadcast entirely without a script. Subjects are chosen because of their social, political, or economic significance. The program has no "ax to grind." In the selection of speakers, the effort is to provide a balanced discussion by participants who have special competence and knowledge. The opinion of each speaker is his own and in no way involves the responsibility of either the University of Chicago or the National Broadcasting Company.



"The big guy's an interventionist, the little guy's an isolationist and the guy underneath is a 'don't know'"

GARDNER REA

[Reprinted through the courtesy of COLLIER'S magazine and Gardner Rea]

SHOULD AMERICA CONVOY TO BRITAIN?

MR. DE VINNEY: Not quite three months ago we met here to discuss whether the United States should increase its aid to Britain. On that occasion you both mentioned that if the answer were "Yes" it might mean convoying to Britain.[1]

Much has happened since that time, and today we are met to discuss "Should America Convoy to Britain?" Utley, do you believe that the United States ought to protect shipping to Britain with its warships?

MR. UTLEY: Three months ago, you recall, I said that I thought we would have to convoy. I still believe so, and believe we should.

MR. DE VINNEY: La Follette, what is your position?

MR. LA FOLLETTE: I am against it!

MR. DE VINNEY: I take it we are on the brink of a very serious discussion. Convoying to Britain means the danger of naval hostilities, does it not?

MR. UTLEY: It means the certainty of hostilities because, when we convoy, the German submarines will try to sink our warships and we will try to sink German submarines.

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[1] *On January 5, 1941, Mr. La Follette, Professor De Vinney, and Mr. Utley discussed "More Aid to Britain Now?"*

MR. DE VINNEY: I take it, then, that the risk of war is far closer today than it was three months ago.

MR. UTLEY: Certainly!

MR. LA FOLLETTE: It is not a *risk* of war; it *is* war

MR. DE VINNEY: Gentlemen, if we are to decide whether or not the United States should send its vessels into open hostilities with Germany, should we not examine rather carefully the reasons which may decide whether or not the United States should bring us this close to war?

MR. UTLEY: I think the reason is very simple. We must maintain Britain, our advance base in the Atlantic. Unless we do convoy, I believe Britain will lose the war to Germany, and Germany will take over all of Britain, plus Europe, too.

MR. DE VINNEY: La Follette, do you agree that it is necessary for the United States to convoy ships to Britain if it is to protect England from defeat?

MR. LA FOLLETTE: I don't think there is any dispute about the fact that at the present moment Britain has about 9,000,000 more tons of shipping than she had when the war began. Bearing that fact in mind, even from Utley's point of view, convoying is not now necessary. Convoying *is* necessary as a part of the interventionists' argument to get us into the war.

MR. UTLEY: If you do not mind, Governor, I would like to state what I think from my point of view. You said that no one disputes the facts. I *do* dispute the facts. At the start of the war the British Empire had 21,000,000 tons of shipping (according to *Lloyd's Register*)—counting all ships over 100 tons—or 14,000,000 tons of what you might call ocean-going ships; that is, over 1,000 tons. You are right that since the start of the war Britain has gained 7,000,000 tons of shipping: 6- or 7,000,000 tons if you count only ships over 1,000 tons; or about 12,000,000 tons if you include nonocean-going ships. That does give Britain on paper (if we disre-

UNITED STATES SHIPBUILDING

February, 1939–March, 1940

November, 1941–April, 1942

EACH COMPLETE SYMBOL EQUALS 200,000 TONS

gard the sinkings) an enormous gain in tonnage; but what you've got to remember is that, from the point of view of availability of ships (and I said *availability*), Britain has less than at the start of the war.[2]

MR. LA FOLLETTE: All I know about it is what Mr. Leach, a *Chicago Daily News* correspondent, wrote a couple of days ago, on information from the British Embassy, where the statement was unequivocally made that they have more shipping now than they had when the war began.

MR. UTLEY: The statement is quite true so far as shipping under British control is concerned, but what you've got to emphasize is this: the shipping under British *control*. They have picked up 7,000,000 tons if you count ocean-going ships, or 12,000,000 tons if you count all ships over 100 tons. All of that shipping, or practically all of it, and much more, was *available* to carry British

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[2] *The "United States News" estimates Britain's merchant marine numbered 13,338,000 gross tons of ocean-going vessels at the beginning of the war (about 21,000,000 tons of all types), and that she has lost 4,000,000 tons of this during the war (plus 1,000,000 tons laid up at any one time for repairs). To replace these vessels, Britain has obtained some 5,000,000 tons of new shipping—1,000,000 tons from her own shipyards, 1,000,000 tons from the United States, and 3,000,000 tons from Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and France. "Fortune" magazine estimates British, allied, and neutral losses since the beginning of the war at 4,500,000 tons (the Nazis claim 9,000,000 tons) and British replacements at 12,000,000 tons. See illustration, pages 14–15.*

cargoes before Britain took any over, because before it came to Britain that shipping was under the flags of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and many other countries which have now been conquered. All of that shipping, while not under British *control*, was working for Britain under the British government shipping pool. So there is less shipping at work for Britain now than at the start of the war.[3]

MR. DE VINNEY: Let me see if I follow your argument. You admit that Britain has gained more in shipping than it has lost since the war began, more, in fact, by 6- or 7,000,000 tons.

MR. UTLEY: Right!

MR. DE VINNEY: But you argue that this shipping is not available for actual use in carrying goods to England?

MR. UTLEY: Look at it this way: Let's take the two of us. I've got a shipping fleet and you've got a shipping fleet. As long as we are both free men I can use all of my shipping fleet, and if I pay you (as I could when you were a neutral at the start of the war) I could use all of your shipping fleet. Then you collapse; you are overrun by Germany. I get half of your shipping fleet. That gives me on paper a gain in the tonnage of shipping *control*, but a decline in the amount of shipping at my *disposal*. See?

MR. DE VINNEY: La Follette, do you agree that Britain now has fewer ships with which to carry goods than when the war started?

MR. LA FOLLETTE: No! The British Embassy says they have *more*. I would rather take their statement than Utley's.

MR. UTLEY: That statement (which I have not seen) is per-

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[3] *The statement of the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies (see page 26) cites the fact that 44 per cent of the ships entering British ports before the war were foreign as evidence of pre-war reliance on foreign shipping. No mention is made of foreign and British ships engaged in the re-export and transhipment of cargos. In 1938, 10 per cent of the cargos entering British ports were reexported.*

fectly consistent with the figures I have given, and you have given no answer, Governor.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: Oh, yes, I have!

MR. UTLEY: Also, I would like to point out that there have been 5,000,000 tons of ships sunk since the start of the war. In addition to the 5,000,000 tons of ships sunk, there has been an unknown amount damaged. The best guess seems to be 4,000,000 tons sunk and 1,000,000 tons damaged at any one time.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: Let's get down to the meat of this problem; that isn't the meat.

MR. UTLEY: That *is* the meat of it.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: Oh, no!

MR. DE VINNEY: Apparently you gentlemen are in agreement that Britain has a net gain of bottoms for carrying goods directly under her control.

MR. UTLEY: I won't accept that.

MR. DE VINNEY: Directly under her *control?*

MR. UTLEY: Yes. There is no net gain for Britain. There is a net loss in ships *available* to carry her war cargoes now compared with the amount available at the start of the war—neutral, and her own.

MR. DE VINNEY: Whether or not total shipping available to Britain at the moment is greater or less than it was at the start of the war, aren't there other considerations concerning the differences in naval power and bases that are relevant to this question?

MR. UTLEY: Certainly there are! The heart of the question (and I think the Governor agrees with this) is whether or not Britain can hold out or whether she goes down if we don't convoy. The total amount of shipping is important. The fact that the Germans have more submarines now than before is important. The fact that German submarines can depart from ports in the west of France, where

they are virtually in battle position, is important. All those things are important. They can do a lot more damage than in the last war. It is all a part of one picture.[4]

MR. DE VINNEY: Would you agree, La Follette, that the general picture would indicate that England needs American convoys?

MR. LA FOLLETTE: At the present time Great Britain does not need American convoys in order to defend herself. Mr. Churchill stated last week that Britain could "save herself for the time being," but it would "take the combined efforts of the whole English-speaking world to save mankind and Europe from the menace of Hitlerism."[5]

As I see the issue it is this: Shall the United States help Britain to defend herself against invasion, or shall we join up with Great Britain to enable Britain to reconquer Europe? The convoy issue is pertinent to that because Britain can get enough materials, according to Mr. Churchill, to defend herself. But the real object behind this convoy issue is to get the United States into the war, but (as a part of the program of the interventionists) it is not only to get us into the war, but all that that implies—an A.E.F. in all likelihood; and even more: that after the war we shall join up with Great Britain to police the entire world for all time.

MR. UTLEY: May I state the issue as I see it? It is whether our advance base, the British Isles, is going to be taken by Germany. I believe that the British Isles cannot be maintained as an advance base; that they will collapse; that Germany will win the war by starving Britain out, unless convoys are undertaken.

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[4] *In the World War, most German submarines reached the North Atlantic by going around Scotland, losing valuable time in going from and coming back to their home bases in Germany.*

[5] *In a speech to the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations, March 27, 1941, in which Mr. Churchill promised aid to Yugoslavia should she decide to resist the Axis.*

Why, Governor, in the past two weeks you have seen the British cutting down the meat ration to one shilling—about six ounces of steak, or a little more of cheaper cuts of meat.[6] Isn't it perfectly clear that the shipping situation is getting desperate, and isn't it perfectly clear that the lifeline of ships must be maintained, with all of the difficulties that now face Britain at the present time? You don't think she is going to collapse, that she is going to go down, if convoys are not used; but I do definitely.

MR. DE VINNEY: You disagree as to whether Britain needs more American convoys. La Follette, your position is that Britain can defend herself in terms of territorial England without convoys from America?

MR. LA FOLLETTE: No, my point is this: that the real issue is not whether Britain is going to collapse, or whether she is not going to collapse. The *real* issue is: What about the United States?

MR. UTLEY: Exactly!

MR. LA FOLLETTE: Remember all the "steps short of war" about which Utley and his interventionists repeatedly told us during the last 18 months? Remember that this program of aid to Britain was to be short of war and that it was the way to keep us out of war? Now they get down to the *real* issue and they are for all-out intervention into the world war.

MR. DE VINNEY: Your position, La Follette, if I understand it, is that Britain will not be defeated even if we do not convoy to Britain, if by Britain's not being defeated we mean territorial England can be defended.

MR. UTLEY: Let me ask you this direct question, Governor: If you were convinced that the Germans would take over and con-

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[6] *On March 26 it was announced by the Food Ministry that the meat ration of adults would be reduced from approximately twenty-four cents to twenty cents worth per week. For children the ration drops to ten cents per week, both reductions becoming effective March 31, 1941.*

trol Britain entirely unless convoys were undertaken, would you then favor convoys?

MR. LA FOLLETTE: I would be opposed to convoys.

MR. UTLEY: You would be opposed? Then so far as we are concerned this discussion is irrelevant, isn't it? I submit it has been established by the very facts that Germany has more submarines; by the fact that sinkings are now going on at the rate of 5,000,000 tons a year of British and British-controlled shippings; by the fact of the rationing in Britain, and by all the other facts, that Britain will not be able to continue indefinitely unless convoys are undertaken by the United States Navy. And I submit that Britain's defense is vital to the defense of the United States. We need not go over reasons for that now because we discussed all that when we talked three months ago.

MR. DE VINNEY: La Follette, is it fair to your position to say that you are completely unconcerned about whether England wins this war?

MR. LA FOLLETTE: I would like to put it this way: I would be in favor of a British victory, but from the very beginning those on my side of this issue opposed every step of the road because we did not believe it would end in "steps short of war." I am utterly opposed to having the United States go over to Europe again, as we did twenty-three years ago, to try to run affairs in another part of the world. We've got a pretty big job to do here in the United States.

MR. UTLEY: And I am utterly opposed to permitting the collapse of Great Britain; to let all of Europe, the British Isles, and the shipbuilding resources of Europe—600 or 700 per cent greater than our own (an estimate which has never been contradicted)—pass into the hands of Germany, making increasing difficulties for us and bringing the war to America. I want to keep this war away from the Americas, and I think convoys will help to do it.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: Why keep the war away from America? You are going over to find the war!

MR. UTLEY: That's your position!

MR. LA FOLLETTE: Isn't it true? Doesn't convoying mean hostilities?

MR. UTLEY: Let me answer that with a full sentence. May I? It means naval warfare with Germany. It does not mean an expeditionary force; it does not mean that we have to invade the Continent; but it does mean we have to maintain that base [Great Britain.—ED.].

You started by arguing that the base can be maintained without convoys, and you argued a long time on that. Then when I came to ask you if you would be in favor of convoys if you thought the base could not be maintained without them, you said "No."

MR. LA FOLLETTE (*aside*): I don't want to interrupt him, but I thought this was more than a one-way conversation.

MR. DE VINNEY: Go ahead!

MR. LA FOLLETTE: Convoys mean hostilities?

MR. UTLEY: Right!

MR. LA FOLLETTE: How are you going to conquer Europe without an army?

MR. UTLEY: That is a good question. I'd like to say two things: First, I believe very strongly that in the event the bridge to Britain can be maintained to enable us to supply Britain with superiority in airplanes, and all other war supplies, Britain can gain air and other superiority over Germany equal to that which Germany has had over Britain until now. I believe that under those circumstances there is a very good chance of German morale collapsing internally when the Germans are convinced that Hitler is not taking them to success. Their morale has been reasonably good because, frankly, up to now he has been leading them to success.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: Is that an answer to my question?

MR. UTLEY: You asked: How is Europe going to be conquered?

MR. LA FOLLETTE: It will be conquered with your airplanes!

MR. UTLEY: Wait a minute! That was an answer to your question—one way it may be done. The second way—since you asked the question I should answer it, in all courtesy . . . .

MR. LA FOLLETTE: Right!

MR. UTLEY: Secondly, I believe that American interests (and I am repeating what I said on the ROUND TABLE three months ago, when we met before) do not require a conquest of all of Europe, but they are not compatible with having Germany keep all of Europe in her possession. If we can give Britain superiority, ultimately we can get a compromise peace, I believe, which will not leave Europe completely under German control.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: The second question; the third one?

MR. DE VINNEY: I advise you not to ask Utley so many questions. It makes him do all the talking.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: He does that pretty well without questions.

MR. DE VINNEY: The University of Chicago ROUND TABLE has brought you two gentlemen together to try to get you to discuss whether the United States should convoy ships to Britain. We seem rather to be discussing whether it makes any difference whether Britain wins the war.

MR. UTLEY: Of course, that is the essence of the issue; isn't it, Governor?

MR. LA FOLLETTE: The essence of the issue is, Where are the interests of the United States? In the Western Hemisphere, or over in Europe? Utley thinks they are over there. He wants to go over there and fight a war just as we did the last time.

MR. DE VINNEY: Let me see if I can summarize the discussion to this point. Utley, your position is that since the United States has a very great stake in a British victory, and since a British victory cannot be assured without the United States convoying ships to Britain, in spite of open naval hostilities and the very great risk of open warfare, we should pay that price to insure Hitler's defeat.

La Follette, your position is that it is no concern whatever to the United States whether England wins or loses this war; that England can make a negotiated peace satisfactory to herself whether we convoy or not; that, since convoying does increase the risk of war, we should have none of it, irrespective of consequences in the rest of the world.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: I don't think it is our job as Americans to tell the British what they shall do. It is our job to look out for our own affairs.

MR. UTLEY: Exactly! It is our job to look after our own affairs, and the fundamental split between the two of us is that La Follette believes our affairs will not be menaced by a complete Hitler victory over Europe and Great Britain; I believe they will be greatly menaced and it will be much cheaper to take the step of convoys now rather than to meet the inevitable war which Germany will bring to us if Britain collapses with no allies whatsoever.

MR. DE VINNEY: Granting your position for a moment, Utley, that an English defeat will be dangerous to us, are there not alternatives less risky than convoying to England?

MR. UTLEY: Certainly!

MR. LA FOLLETTE: There are a number of things we could do. We could take over a lot of British shipping routes in the Far East, to permit them to move ships into the trade routes of the Atlantic. I noticed before the broadcast today that the Secretary of the Treasury has taken over Italian ships in American harbors. From my point of view, the reason Utley and his group want con-

THE SHIPPI

TOTAL BRITISH TONNAGE, MARCH, 1941

MINIMUM BRITISH NEEDS*

TOTAL BRITISH LOSSES TO MARCH 16, 1941

TOTAL TONNAGE BUILT BY BRITAIN AND THE UNITED S

TOTAL UNITED STATES TONNAGE TODAY

EACH COMPLETE SYMBOL EQUALS 2,000,000 TONS

* *According to competent authorities.*

SITUATION

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MR. DE VINNEY: As to whether we should convoy to England or not you gentlemen seem to have reached more or less of a stalemate, because you, La Follette, feel that convoying is to be completely disregarded, as is all other aid to Britain, since we should maximize the assurance of our staying out of the war and disregard whatever happens in Europe or the rest of the world.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: Oh, no! Not disregard what happens in Europe and the rest of the world! On the contrary, I think we've got to recognize that we are in a new world and that the United States must play a new part. I agree with Utley on that. I don't want to see the United States play its part tied up with Europe. I think America has come of age and can stand on her own feet and that we are not huddled behind the British fleet.

MR. DE VINNEY: La Follette, what part do you think America ought to play in this world? In what way?

MR. LA FOLLETTE: I think the first thing for us to do is to put our own house in order. The real challenge of Hitlerism is in Hitler's philosophy that in a modern world you cannot have both freedom and economic security; the only way you can have economic security is by giving up your freedom. I think America's job is to demonstrate to the world that in a great country like ours Mr. Hitler's philosophy is a lie; that people can be free, and that they can have security.

MR. UTLEY: There, you see, is another fundamental point of divergence between the Governor and myself. I believe that if Germany wins this war—conquering all of Europe, Britain, and all of the Old World on that side—and with the Japanese against us on the other side, that we will not be left free in any way. We will be challenged all the time. We will be challenged militarily; we will be challenged ideologically; we will be challenged economically. We will face their total war against us.

If I believed for a second that what the Governor thinks is possible or likely or could be done with any chance of success, or as cheaply as what I want to do, I'd be with him. Our objectives are the same, but I believe he is completely blind, frankly, to the total war which will be waged against us if we, without allies, must face the war that will be waged against us.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: May I make the point that everything Utley says was said to us in 1917. We did just that. We went over to get rid of the Kaiser, and we got rid of the Kaiser. Now, in substance, the war in Europe is to try to get the Kaiser back, or somebody like him.

MR. UTLEY: This should not be a part of today's discussion, because it comes in another ROUND TABLE to be broadcast later. My own belief is that in the event we had not only intervened in that last war, but had stayed intervened; had really . . . .

MR. LA FOLLETTE: Now we come to the point!

MR. UTLEY: Had we really put our support back of the League of Nations . . . .

MR. LA FOLLETTE: You want us back in the old League of Nations!

MR. UTLEY: Had we supported the old League of Nations . . . .

MR. LA FOLLETTE: What you want is the League of Nations back! You want the United States to join up with—what is it?—this "Union Now"? You want to pull down the American flag and make us part of the British Empire!

MR. UTLEY: Pardon me, Governor! That statement is hardly worth a reply.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: That's Streit's argument, isn't it?[10]

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MR. UTLEY: Since you raised the question, the way I look at it is this: In every period in world-history, wherever there has been stability there has been a balance of power and some nation has held that balance of power at various times. In the nineteenth century it was the British Empire; in the twentieth century it is the United States. This is going to be *our* century.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: If there has to be one, I'd like to see the United States . . . .

MR. UTLEY: I am not anxious to have the United States join the British Empire, but I think if they want to exist after this war they are, essentially, going to have to join us.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: That would be fine, but I want the United States to maintain its integrity on this side of the ocean in the Western Hemisphere, where we belong.

MR. UTLEY: We protocoled our disagreement on that subject pretty definitely.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: That's a five-dollar word!

MR. UTLEY: It's a ten-dollar word; I'll put it in my pocket and keep it. But I do submit that I have established the fact that the British cannot continue indefinitely without the bridge of ships being maintained. The sinkings are so great that it cannot be maintained without American convoys.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: No, you haven't; but you have taken the position that Britain (and I agree with you) cannot win this war in terms of conquering Europe and reestablishing the British Empire without convoys, and our American army.

MR. UTLEY: With that I agree, but you don't agree that Britain can avoid defeat.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: According to Mr. Churchill (and I'd rather take his statement than yours) Britain can avoid invasion. She can defend herself; she can defend this front line we are talking about.

MR. UTLEY: Your mention of Mr. Churchill's statement is very interesting. Did you ever hear the manager of the Chicago Cubs, or any baseball manager, start out the year by saying: "Boys, we are not going to win this year; we are pretty bad"? Of course, Churchill says Britain cannot be invaded!

MR. LA FOLLETTE: I would like to say, too, that your side from the beginning told the people one thing when it had something else in mind. You had war in mind.

MR. DE VINNEY: Gentlemen, let us see if we can get this issue clear!

MR. UTLEY: He has made a charge against me, and I think I can defend myself, if you don't mind.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: You can do a pretty good job defending yourself!

MR. UTLEY: You said that I said things that might be misleading. I have said from the start, before the lend-lease bill was up, that this was going to end in convoys, and I will continue to say that.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: I would like to say this for you: that when we discussed this before you were the one and only fellow on your side of the argument who has come out frankly and said, "war." All the others talk about "steps short of war."

MR. UTLEY: There are going to be naval hostilities and there is no other way to defend the British Empire.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: Now it is the British Empire again!

MR. UTLEY: It is the only way to defend American interests.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: It is the British Empire you are talking about!

MR. DE VINNEY: La Follete, I cannot get your position clear. At one moment it seems to me you argue that it makes no difference

to us whether England wins or loses this war; that our one concern is peace and what we can do internally in the United States. At the next moment you take sharp issue with Utley when he argues that without convoy Britain cannot defend herself against Hitler. You seem to imply that England can prevent a Hitler victory as far as the invasion of England is concerned even if we do not convoy to Britain.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: I suppose this is my point: that even from Utley's point of view, from the point of view of those who want to get into the war—even from their point of view—on the facts that exist now there is no immediate need for convoys. The reason they want convoys *now*, before it is essential, is as a certain way to involve the United States in this war!

MR. UTLEY: There are two interesting phrases which I would like to comment upon: "Those who want to get into the war." None of us want to get into the war. We all dread it, Governor—all of us on both sides—but we have various ideas of how best to defend America, and I believe convoys is one way to defend American interests.

The second thing you said, "even though there is no immediate need of convoy"—that seems to imply that you admit there will be a later need. If there is going to be a need later, certainly you ought to want to do it now when you can get the most results and do it the soonest.

MR. LA FOLLETTE: What you want is to reconquer Europe for the British Empire.

MR. UTLEY: I disagree with you, Governor, but we will have to take care of this part of the argument another time. It was swell to meet you again!

MR. DE VINNEY: Since we met three months ago much has happened. At that time the American people were trying to decide the issue of whether to give aid to Britain. The American people have decided in the affirmative, and now the issue is: Shall the

United States convoy that aid to Britain? The differences between you seem to remain the same. You, La Follette, feel that we should neither give more aid to Britain nor convoy that aid, because our supreme interest is peace—that we have no important concern with a British victory. You, on the other hand, Utley, feel that we should give aid to Britain and should convoy that aid in spite of a terrific risk of war, because the possibility of the maintenance of free institutions in this country depends upon Hitler's defeat which can be assured only by convoying.

I am reminded, gentlemen, of Macbeth's witches, who said:

When shall we three meet again—
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?
When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.
That will be ere the set of sun.

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OBJECTIVE QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION

The answers to the following questions may be found in the text of the broadcast, and page references are provided to assist in locating the answers.

*

1. According to Mr. La Follette, Britain now has how much *more* shipping than when the war started? Page 4.
2. When the war began, *Lloyd's Register* listed what total for British shipping tonnage? Of this, how much was over 1,000 tons? Page 4.
3. What is Mr. Utley's estimate of the amount of British shipping sunk since the war started? Page 7.
4. What statement by Winston Churchill does Mr. La Follette quote to defend his thesis that Britain does not need convoys? Page 8.
5. British meat rations have been reduced to what figure? Page 9.
6. Mr. Utley states the shipbuilding power of Europe, compared to that of the United States, to be how great? Page 10.
7. List some of the alternative ways—other than convoys—by which the United States might lighten the burden of the British in feeding their population and supplying their armed forces. Page 16.
8. How do Mr. La Follette and Mr. Utley summarize their positions on the threat of Hitlerism to America? Page 18.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The following questions of wider scope, intended for discussion, are suggested by the broadcast, and answers may be found in the literature on the subject listed in the section "Suggested Readings," found on page 26.

*

1. Do you agree or disagree with the statements that convoys would be a great help to the British? That Britain will fall if they are not forthcoming?

2. Compare the German and British positions in the "Battle of the Atlantic" now and in 1917 and 1918. How do their respective naval strengths compare? Their bases and zones of effective operation?

3. How do you feel about the United States taking other steps—"short of convoys"—to aid Britain in the shipping field? Suggest some of these steps and comment on their effectiveness in aiding Britain.

4. "Convoys mean an A.E.F." Comment on this assertion that naval hostilities cannot be limited. Do you agree or disagree? Make out a case for your side of the argument.

5. One fundamental question upon which the speakers on the ROUND TABLE disagreed was the importance of Britain in relation to American safety. Summarize and comment upon their views on the proposition: "Britain is America's first line of defense."

SUGGESTED READINGS

"Battle of the Atlantic," *Life*, March 24, 1941. *Summary of British shipping problems as a background to the present controversy over convoys.*

GISSEN, MAX, "The Battle of the Atlantic," *New Republic*, March 24, 1941. *The general problem of British shipping and Nazi attacks upon it briefly summarized.*

HARTLEY, LIVINGSTON, "Threat to the Lifeline," published by the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies. *The background of the convoy problem, stating the case for convoys.*

"North Atlantic Passage," *Fortune*, April, 1941. *First-hand account of wartime shipping between Britain and the United States.*

PRATT, ADMIRAL WILLIAM V., "Convoys—Short of War," *Newsweek*, March 24, 1941. *Some of the possibilities and problems of American naval convoys expertly discussed with special consideration to the possibility of convoying one-half or one-third of the way to Britain.*

"Shall Our Navy Aid Britain?" *United States News*, February 7, 1941. *A compilation of newspaper reactions to proposed convoys of freighters under protection of the American navy.*

"Should the American Navy Be Used to Convoy Merchant Ships in Western Half of Atlantic?" *United States News*, January 17, 1941. *Representative answers from such national leaders as Hanford MacNider, Major General John Lejeune, William R. Castle, Senator Nye, and Rear Admiral Yates Stirling.*

The Listeners' Round Table . . . .

Letters to the ROUND TABLE *frequently contain interesting and illuminating sidelights on the subject matter discussed on the air. These comments are from letters received following the broadcast discussion of "Defense Economics" March 23, 1941.*

*

Revolutionary Times

I fail to see how more taxes can be imposed upon the person who earns $800 a year. In these revolutionary times with so many destructive influences at work we should be careful to treat with every consideration people whose earnings are small and insufficient to permit them to live comfortably, and to alleviate his lot instead of making it increasingly harder to get along. These disgruntled masses will easily fall prey to subversive propaganda and join with forces who work for the overthrow of our form of government.

H. L. F., New York

*

Town Cross-section

It is interesting to listen to a discussion of the University of Chicago ROUND TABLE, but it is still more interesting to listen to others who have listened to the discussion, and discuss what they have heard discussed.

This morning I went to a chain grocery store. When I came into the place, I found the argument hot. It seems that a much hotter discussion had taken place in a beer garden the night before, and the manager of the chain store was in on that, and he brought it with him to the store this morning, although the manager was not in the store when I came in.

There were five people in the store besides myself. All had heard the discussion yesterday (March 23) of the ROUND TABLE.

The clerk in the store earns $22.50 per week, has a wife and two children to support. He says that he would be pleased if some of the professors would tell the radio audience how he could pay more taxes and hidden taxes than he is now paying. Two weeks ago he moved out of a house because the rent was jacked up to $25 per month. He says that if food and clothing are boosted up in proportion to house rent, he and his family cannot exist. He says that he has voted twice for Mr. Roosevelt, but now he will vote for any man who will oppose Mr. Roosevelt and his principles.

A man who works in a machine shop at night thought it strange that Mr. Roosevelt did not propose to rearm the country in 1937, instead of talking about enlarging the Supreme Court; that Hitler was as much a menace then as now. As then, Hitler was supposed to be somebody, as he

had disbanded labor unions. This man says that when this re-arming is completed, there will be little work, as there will be no market for manufactured goods as no one will have the money to buy with, as most of the money will go to pay high taxes, to pay the interest on the huge bond floated by the government. He says that he cannot pay higher taxes if food and clothing prices rise.

There were three housewives in the store. One was a wife of an unemployed man, and the man's last job was on the WPA. She could say only one thing.

The other two women's husbands are unskilled workers in factories. They said that they could not pay higher taxes, unless their husbands got more money and if food and clothing prices did not go up.

The clerk in the store says that the farmers who come in to trade eggs for groceries say that they have to have more money for their products or they can't exist, as the farmers say that everything they buy has jumped sky high, and they can't pay higher taxes.

There was not a one in that store who had ever sent for any discussion of the ROUND TABLE or written to express their opinions on any subject.

These people are only mildly interested in the lend-lease bill or how much money Congress will spend.

The woman whose husband had been on WPA said that she would vote again for Mr. Roosevelt, as he had been a friend of the poor people.

I do not say that this is a cross-section of the views of people here in Michigan or in this town. It is only interesting how a certain class of people change their opinions of a man, and what people think about higher taxes. Perhaps the skilled machinist to whom I spoke summed up everything in a concise manner.

"People don't give a d—— about how high taxes go as long as they don't have to pay them."

He should have included Congressmen in that category.

W. A. G., Michigan

*

Animals

That part of your discussion today which referred to taxing large industrial concerns was especially significant, for it reiterated as an established fact the naïve big-business contention that large industrials are not now and never have been making more than modest profits on their investments.

Tax and decentralize to save the submerged one-third of our people and become more intelligent than animals. Animals do not suffer want amidst plenty while humans do!

J. H. M., Missouri

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APRIL 6, 1941

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